

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
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To: State Directors

From: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Subject: Equivalency Determination for Fire Training Courses

Equivalent fire training courses must meet two criteria. First, they are classes that have been determined by evaluators to be equivalent to courses identified in the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) approved curriculum. Second, they must have been approved as equivalent courses by the Office of Fire and Aviation's (OF&A) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Training Unit Leader at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC). Previously approved equivalent courses are listed in Attachment #1.

1. Process to Evaluate and Establish Equivalent Courses. The appropriate State Office fire management staff or national committee shall identify the need for an equivalency analysis of a specific course. The State Office or committee can assemble an evaluation team (see # 2 below regarding the team composition) to conduct the analysis, document their findings, and submit recommendations through agency channels to the OF&A's BLM Training Unit for an equivalency review. If assistance is needed in assembling the appropriate evaluation team or conducting the evaluation, it can be requested from the BLM Training Unit.
 - a. If the BLM Training Unit Leader determines that the equivalent course analysis is sufficient and the proposed course meets the NWCG certified course standards, the Director, OF&A shall issue a memorandum stating that the course is equivalent.
 - b. The BLM Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) Lead will issue a course number for the equivalent course and enter it into IQCS with a competency for the NWCG course. The Lead will provide the information to the Federal Fire Training Task Group for interagency collaboration on equivalent courses.

- c. The BLM Training Unit Leader may also provide the equivalency information to the NWCG Training Working Team and the Geographic Area Training Representatives (GATRs), other agencies and/or the states for information-sharing purposes.
- d. If the BLM Training Unit Leader determines that the equivalent course analysis is not sufficient or that it does not support a recommendation to designate the course equivalent, the Director, OF&A shall issue a memorandum stating this to the State Office or committee that initiated the evaluation process.

Analyses conducted by other agencies may also be used in making course equivalency determinations.

2. Evaluation Team Composition. The evaluation team shall be comprised of a minimum of three of the following members: lead instructor, cadre member, and course developer or subject matter expert for the respective NWCG course. The evaluators shall be individuals who have either been involved within the past three years in instructing the course that is being evaluated, or who are familiar with the course development and revision process.
3. Evaluation Methodology. The evaluation team shall consider, at a minimum, the following items when attempting to determine whether a course is equivalent to an NWCG course or not:
 - a. Comparison of course objectives. The learning objectives of the two courses must be thoroughly analyzed and found to be substantially similar, both at the unit level and at the course level.
 - b. Comparison of course content. There should be no omissions of major topics, procedures or concepts that are contained in the NWCG course.
 - c. Testing. Tests administered to trainees to measure content learned must be similar in terms of information tested, length of test, and percentage required for a passing grade.
 - d. Documentation of findings. The evaluation team shall document its analysis and findings and forward them to the BLM Training Unit at NIFC with its recommendation.

It is acceptable for an equivalent course to have more in-depth subject matter content than an NWCG course; it is not acceptable for it to have less.

4. Equivalent Courses. The OF&A has previously determined that the courses listed in Attachment #1 are equivalent to the identified NWCG course. Persons who have successfully completed the identified equivalent course do not need to attend the corresponding NWCG course, and should receive credit for it in the Incident Qualifications and Certification System.

If you have questions or comments regarding equivalency determination for fire training courses, please

contact Larry Sutton, BLM Training Unit Leader, Office of Fire and Aviation, at (208) 387-5374.

Signed by:
Timothy M. Murphy
Acting Director
Office of Fire and Aviation

Authenticated by:
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Attachment (1)

Approved Equivalent Fire Training Courses – 1 page

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